

## Message Text

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ACTION EUR-08

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FM AMEMBASSY ATHENS

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 7147

C O N F I D E N T I A L ATHENS 685

LIMDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: MASS TU PFOR GR

SUBJ: MILITARY ASSISTANCE TO TURKEY: MEETING WITH  
BITSIOS JANUARY 24

1. DURING MY FRIDAY NIGHT MEETING WITH FOREIGN MINISTER BITSIOS (SEPTELS) I EXPLAINED TO HIM THE CIRCUMSTANCES AND SOME OF THE DETAILS SURROUNDING THE SUBSTANTIAL PUBLICITY HERE IN GREECE THE LAST DAY OR TWO ABOUT U.S. MILITARY ASSISTANCE TO TURKEY, SPECIFICALLY APPROXIMATELY 230 MILLION DOLLARS TO ASSIST TURKEY TO MODERNIZE ITS TANK FORCES.

2. I TOLD BITSIOS THAT I UNDERSTOOD THE DEFENSE DEPARTMENT HAD NOTIFIED THE CONGRESS, IN ACCORDANCE WITH LEGISLATIVE REQUIREMENTS, THAT THE U.S. PLANNING TO MAKE "KITS" AVAILABLE TO TURKEY TO UPGRADE THE CAPABILITY OF M-48 TANKS ALREADY ON HAND. I SAID THAT CONTRARY TO PRESS ALLEGATIONS IN GREECE NO M-48 TANKS WERE ACTUALLY BEING SOLD TO TURKEY. I ALSO SAID THAT I UNDERSTOOD THAT THE NOTIFICATION TO THE CONGRESS WAS OF A PRELIMINARY NATURE AND READ TO BITSIOS THE STATEMENTS MADE BY THE STATE DEPT SPOKESMAN POINTING OUT THAT NONE OF THE PROPOSED "KITS" WOULD BE FURNISHED TO TURKEY PRIOR  
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TO FEBRUARY 5, AND NO PART OF THE PROPOSAL WOULD BE

FURNISHED AFTER FEBRUARY 5TH UNLESS THE SALE WAS PERMISSIBLE UNDER APPLICABLE STATUTES.

3. I TOLD BITSIOS THAT I HAD MET WITH ARCHBISHOP IAKOVOS WHO IS VISITING IN ATHENS, EARLIER FRIDAY EVENING AND THAT THE ARCHBISHOP TOLD ME THAT PRIME MINISTER CARAMANLIS HAD BEEN QUITE UPSET AND DISAPPOINTED ABOUT THE PENTAGON ANNOUNCEMENT. I ASKED BITSIOS, WHO SAID HE WOULD BE TALKING TO CARAMANLIS LATER FRIDAY NIGHT, TO EXPLAIN TO THE PRIME MINISTER THE CIRCUMSTANCES LEADING TO THE PUBLICITY ABOUT THIS MATTER.

4. I WENT ON TO GIVE BITSIOS MORE DETAILS ON THE SUBJECT.

I EXPLAINED THAT THE GREEK ARMED FORCES WERE ALSO WELL AWARE OF THE AVAILABILITY OF THESE "KITS" FOR APPLICATION TO GREEK M-48 TANKS AND SAID THAT DETAILED BROCHURES DESCRIBING THESE KITS HAVE BEEN PROVIDED THE GREEK ARMED FORCES AND THAT DISCUSSIONS CONCERNING THEM HAD BEEN HELD WITH MEMBERS OF MY OWN MILITARY STAFF. I SAID THAT, SO FAR AS WE KNEW, GREECE HAD NOT YET TAKEN A DECISION AS TO WHETHER OR NOT TO ACQUIRE THESE KITS, BUT THAT I UNDERSTOOD THAT THEY COULD BE MADE AVAILABLE. I SAID THAT I UNDERSTOOD THAT THE KITS WERE MANUFACTURED BY THE CHRYSLER CORPORATION AND THAT OUR DEFENSE DEPARTMENT'S NOTIFICATION TO THE CONGRESS ABOUT THIS MATTER WAS NOT THE RESULT OF A SUDDEN NEW DEVELOPMENT BUT HAD FOLLOWIED APPROXIMATELY TWO YEARS OF NEGOTIATIONS.

5. BITSIOS SAID HE THOUGHT IT WAS MOST UNFORTUNATE THAT SO MUCH PUBLICITY HAD BEEN GIVEN TO THIS MATTER AT THIS TIME. HOWEVER, HE SAID THE VERY MUCH APPRECIATED THE INFORMATION I HAD GIVEN HIM AND ACCEPTED MY EXPLANATION, WHICH HE WOULD PASS ON TO CARAMANLIS RIGHT AWAY.  
KUBISCH

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## Message Attributes

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